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ABSTRACT

Choice or Chance: A Career Decision-Making Workshop for Undecided Majors is a 5-session, 10-hour workshop which provides college students with a viable structure for self-evaluation and information gathering. The workshop is intended for undecided college students who will learn a process for making effective decisions and how to apply that process to choosing an appropriate major and related career direction. The first session establishes a foundation that includes recognizing internal and external barriers, dispelling myths and unrealistic aspirations, encouraging reality testing, and providing a model for the process of choosing a major or career. The second session introduces self-assessment and focuses on transferrable, work-content, and self-management skills. The third session involves a discussion of personality factors which relate to major/career choice and an examination of work values. The fourth session addresses interests and the final phase of self-assessment and begins the process of synthesis. The final session consists of individual verbal reports from each participant, which include tentative conclusions and up to three major/career options being considered. Group members and leaders assist participants in evaluating their conclusions and developing an action plan. (Activities and materials for the workshop are outlined for each session.) (NB)

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CHOICE OR CHANCE: A CAREER DECISION-MAKING
WORKSHOP FOR UNDECIDED MAJORS

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the California
Association for Counseling and Development, Los Angeles, CA,
February 12-15, 1987.

Choice or Chance: A Career Decision-Making Workshop for Undecided Majors is a five-session, ten-hour workshop which provides the student with a viable structure for self-evaluation and information gathering. The intended outcomes are twofold: the student learns a process for making effective decisions and applies that process to choosing an appropriate major and related career direction. The target population for the workshop is the undecided college student and it has been successfully used with both traditional aged and adult re-entry students. The workshop is offered 3-4 times each semester and is limited to 10-15 participants per session.

It is our premise that a career decision-making workshop begins with establishing a foundation that includes recognizing internal and external barriers, dispelling myths and unrealistic aspirations, encouraging reality testing and providing a model for the process of choosing a major/career.

The second session introduces self-assessment, with a focus on skills: transferrable, work-content and self-management. The Motivated Skills Card Sort is one of the preferred activities of these authors because it provides a kinesthetic experience, a cognitive assessment and immediate feedback.

The third session involves a discussion of personality factors which relate to major/career choice, using the Myers-Briggs Temperament Inventory. Further, the group explores work values in a participatory exercise, such as a values auction where students prioritize and bid for these values. The facilitator then leads a discussion that assists the group members to understand and internalize their values and to recognize how they approach the values-setting process.

The fourth session addresses both interests and the final phase of self-assessment and begins the process of synthesis. Career and related occupational interests are explored via the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory. Students work with special forms designed to continue the process of compiling information identifying patterns and issues. Students are instructed in how to conduct major/career research as a foundation for comparing self-assessment data with information about the world of work.

We strongly recommend an introduction to Career Planning and Placement services and a tour of the career library facilities at this time.

The final session consists of individual verbal reports from each participant, which include tentative conclusions and up to three alternative major/career options being considered by the participant. The group members and facilitator(s) respond and make suggestions, assisting participants to evaluate their conclusions and develop an action plan.

We have found this format to be highly successful, well-received by participants, and well-subscribed on our campus.

Activities and Materials for "CHOICE OR CHANCE": A Career Decision-
Making Workshop for Undecided Majors
as presented by
the Office of Career Planning and Placement and
the University Counseling Center,
California State University, Northridge

SESSION 1

Activities

Handouts

INTRODUCTION

Preliminary activities

- facilitators
- purpose of group
- develop group identity
- elicit, clarify and respond to
students' expectations
- introduce concepts of
 - career, job, occupation
 - major
- "Ice Breaker"
 - "Bolles Party Game"

Introduce "Self Assessment Survey"

"Self Assessment Survey"

Introduce "Major Decision Model"

"Major Decision Pyramid"
"Making the Decision About
Your Major"

Introduce "Barriers Worksheet"

"Barriers Worksheet"

- discussion
 - internal and external factors
in career decision-making
(Hwk OR small-group
discussion OR hold for
pre/post comparison)

"The Party Game" from Richard N. Bolles' *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, Ten
Speed Press, Berkeley, CA.

Session 2

Activities

Handouts

SKILLS

Introduction to "skills"

- definition
- transferable skills
- work content
- self-management

- identify skills in relation to classroom and/or prior work experience

- discussion of skills in relation to choice of major

Sidney Fine's Definition of skills

Motivated Skills Cardsort

- administration of MSCS
- discussion

Motivated Skills Cardsort Matrix

Bolles, R. N., *The Three Boxes of Life*, Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA.
"Motivated Skills Cardsort", Career Research and Testing, San Jose, CA.

Session 3

Activities

Handouts

PERSONALITY

Interpretation of Myers-Briggs
Type Indicator

- explain theory

- explain "types"

- explain relation to
choice of major
and eventual career
choice.

- discussion

[Taken prior to first session]

MBTI handouts

Keirsey descriptions

VALUES

Values Auction

- discussion of values in relation
to choices made in following areas:

- personal

- academic

- occupation

Auction Materials

[list and descriptions
could be work values
from any recognized
values list] (includes
brief descriptions)

Hirsch, S.K., *Using the MBTI in Organizations: A Resource Book*,
Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, CA.

Keirsey, D. and Bates, M., *Please Understand Me: Character and
Temperament Types*, Prometheus Nemesis Books, Del Mar, CA.

Myers, I.B., *Gifts Differing*, CPP, Palo Alto, CA.

Schemel, G.J. and Borbely, J.A., *Facing Your Type*, TypoProfile Press,
Wernersville, PA.

"Myers-Briggs Type Indicator", sold by CPP, Palo Alto, CA.

Myers, I.B. and McCauley, M.H., *Manual: A Guide to the Development and
Use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, CPP, Palo Alto, CA.

Session 4

Activities

Handouts

INTERESTS

Prompt discussion and answer questions arising from last week's session

Strong-Campbell Interpretation

- discussion of SCII codes in relation to occupational/major choice
- discussion of relation between MBTI and SCII

SCII profile

[Taken by student prior to first meeting]

- re-introduce concept of major choice
- integrate self-assessment information from
 - MS Cardsort, V Auction
 - SCII, MBTI
- discussion

List of academic majors and options

CAREER RESEARCH

Tour of Career Center: Focus on occupational research

- occupational library materials
- government publications
 - *Occupational Outlook Handbook*
 - *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*
- private texts
 - *"The Job Game: A Career Handbook"*
 - *"What Color Is Your Parachute?"*
 - *"The Career Choices Encyclopedia"*
 - *"Opportunities in..." Series*

May include information regarding:

- internships
- information interviews
- interviews
 - instructors
 - department chairpersons
 - counselors
 - parents

HOMEWORK : Students are to choose up to three potential majors. Come to a "tentative" decision and outline steps that will be involved in coming to a final decision.

U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook and Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, Washington, D.C.

Loniello, M., Sugimoto, L., and Jackson, G., *The Job Game: A Career Handbook*, Gorsuch Scarsbrick Press, Scottsdale, AZ.

"Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory", sold/scored by CPP, Palo Alto, CA.
Opportunities in..., VEM Career Horizons, Div. of National Textbook Co., Skokie, IL.

Hansen, J., *Manual for the SVIB-SCII*, 4th Edition, CPP, Palo Alto, CA.
The Career Choices Encyclopedia: Guide to Entry Level Jobs, Career Associates, Walker and Co., N.Y.

Session 5

Activities

Handouts

"BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER"

Presentation by each group participant
of potential choices

-feedback processing from
facilitator and group members
as desired or necessary

Review Barriers Worksheet

Return Barriers Worksheet

Tie in careers to major

Group Evaluation

Evaluation sheet

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MAKING THE DECISION ABOUT YOUR MAJOR

